



Home Buyer Should Insist Upon Reliable Inspection



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According to lawyers, the No. 1 source of litigation in residential real estate transactions is the failure by sellers to disclose property defects.



These defects should be a concern for buyers even in times of short supply and multiple offers.

Red-flag defects include highly publicized problems such as asbestos, radon, lead-based paint, toxic mold and poor indoor air quality, as well as structural issues such as foundation cracks, leaking windows, sagging floors and buckling walls.



Consider, too, the age of the furnace, the condition of the roof or roofs, drainage and whether there is a fuel-oil tank buried in the yard.



If the property in question had no public water supply, what about the well? Has the prolonged drought affected it in some way?

If you are going to spend top dollar for a house, you want a golden goose and not a turkey.



Now, that doesn't mean the house has to be perfect. You are going to spend some money after you move in - industry experts say an average of \$6,000 within the first six months. But wouldn't you rather focus on new curtains, paint and additional storage that on a furnace or a new roof?



Although sellers cringe merely at the mention of it, and some residential builders continue to set up obstacles to it, you should not forgo a professional home inspection by a reliable inspector.



By reliable, we are talking about inspectors who belong to associations that establish strict requirements for membership, including professional experience, as well as standards for inspection.



The American Society of Home Inspectors (www.ashi.org, 1-800-743-2744) and the National Association of Home Inspectors (www.NAHI.org, 1-800-448-3942) are two such groups. Each maintains a list of members on its Web site.



Before an inspector begins work, he or she is required to provide you with a list of what the inspection will entail so there will be no misunderstandings or lawsuits.



Just because you hire a home inspector doesn't mean you should close your eyes. As a buyer, you must have as intimate a knowledge of the house as possible when you reach settlement.